

## Shared Fking Trauma by the ocean weekender

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**Summary:** Steve and Billy are very messed up in the aftermath of Season 3, even though Billy didn't die and they end up falling into bed (well, the back of Billy's Camaro) together. Now they have to learn to navigate life and shared fucking trauma. or: billy moves in with steve after not-dying in season 3 and cohabitation is an absolute shit fest

## Shared Fking Trauma

The other side of the bed is cold by the time Billy wakes up and immediately he is on edge, feeling his skin pull back and his hackles rising- something is wrong here. Very wrong. Harrington is always in bed beside him when he wakes up and there are no rules to this shitty fucking life he's been given, or so Hopper lectured, but that's one of them: Billy never wakes up alone.

As stealthily as he can manage given that his bones crack together stiffly since that ... *thing* left him, he crawls out of bed and makes his way to the bathroom down the hall, nail bat in hand, wondering why if there was an intruder Steve didn't wake him or even bother taking the bat from its home under the bed. (It's their bed, now, but this is *not the time*.) Under his feet the plush carpet muffles the sound of his footsteps and he feels a world away from sneaking to the bathroom to clean himself up after Neil got angry with him, when he'd have to avoid every floorboard that creaked and edge past Max' door to get to the first aid kit. He wonders how grown up he'll have to be before he doesn't have to worry about a monster.

Light is spilling from under the door- open an inch- breathing echoing off the cold white tiles- he clenches the bat tighter- closes his eyes and breathes in- opens his eyes- goes in swinging- the nail bat cracks the marble sink that's worth probably more than Billy's whole life put together- "Harrington you *know* you're meant to tell someone about this shit!" Billy snarls when he sees him curled on the bathroom floor with vomit round his mouth. He drops the bat and it rattles around the bathtub before coming to a stop. Steve doesn't answer and it only posses him off more.

Early morning is peering in through the window and he knows, knows in his *bones*, that the other boy has been here all fucking night and that boy is a *fucking idiot*.

Still no answer and Billy swears at him with every curse word he knows and then bends down and washes his face with the hand towel he fishes out of the cupboard under the sink. "You're a goddamn douche bag, princess, you know that? Do I have to tell Hopper about this?"

"No," Steve moans immediately, rousing and unfolding his long limbs and moaning again when he's stiff from a night on the floor. And Billy never would tell Hopper- because that's an uneasy truce he and Harrington have created between themselves- but sometimes threatening one another is the only way they can get them to take proper care of themselves.

"Well then fucking *get up*, I'm not carrying you back to bed."

"I don't want to go to bed." Billy has to strain to hear him- Steve is quiet when something is wrong, he's discovered in the three months they've been reluctant roommates, and he hates this quiet Steve who doesn't retaliate when Billy calls him a bastard.

"Tough fucking shit," he hauls him to his feet and stops him falling over, "Where d'you want to go, then, the sofa?"

A nod. Sighing at what his life has become, Billy carries him downstairs to the sofa. Technically it shouldn't be possible with how much weight they've both lost since the *thing* left, but then the *thing* shouldn't have been possible either, or living together without killing each other. Or sharing the same bed and living together; or living away from Neil or any of the stupid kids giving a shit about him after what he'd done. He's discovered one benefit to having an ugly flower bed-monster taking over his mind and that's that the poison in his veins makes him stronger than he should be and heal better than anyone. *Like Captain America*, Max's stupid boyfriend had offered in one of the many tiny ways Harrington's kids are trying to forgive him and he'll be damned if he tells anyone how fondly he cherishes that memory.

Basically: he carries Harrington to the sofa like the fucking princess he is. The Harringtons are rich and this has allowed them to buy several couches for the multiple lounges in their house in Hawkins, Indiana they don't live in and all of them are big enough for the two of them to lie on together. Because he has no doubt Harrington will beg him to do that gay shit later.

The situation requires the bucket from the garage and Billy carries him out into the garage with him instead of settling him in the lounge first, refusing to be gentle or quiet or careful. Serves him right

for spending all night on the bathroom floor.

Steve's hands are pale baby birds trembling all over him: first round his neck, then clutching at his shoulders and then one wondering up and down his arm whilst the other plucks at the hem of Billy's shirt, fingers occasionally wondering underneath to brush over his skin. He remembers pinning the girl down, hands, *his hands* all over her to stop her struggling, the blood over them both. When he slams the garage door behind him, it's loud enough to echo throughout the huge house and he kicks the bucket across the lino instead of picking it up, making sure it leaves scuff marks. Shit, even the *floor* is worth more than Billy's life put together. Harrington's folks are nearly as rich as the fucking Rockefellers and the asshole isn't even happy about it.

"Wait," the asshole says as he gets his feet under him, one hand still on Billy's shoulder and the other holding the arm of the couch he was about to lie down on. Bending over, he retches. There's a red flush across his cheeks and with the green bile he's bringing up he reminds Billy of a fucking Christmas tree. All Billy can do it wait until it's over- he at least is smart enough to aim for the bucket- and then he crumples onto the couch of his own accord, tangling his legs in the orange blanket folded up on the other cushion until Billy gives in and spreads it over him.

"Are you done?" it doesn't come out as snappish as he'd hoped. He nods and curls further into his blanket. Billy has to go before he feels something tender.

Steve spots the bucket with its contents and scoffs. "That's the one I puked in when you gave me that concussion," the words are spoken softly, as if he's reminiscing about the *good ol' days* which perhaps they were- certainly Billy would go back to their time in High School if he could. Only it's all- as Steve would say- bullshit, because Max was still (rightly) scared of him even then and Harrington's parents still weren't around and the only difference between then and now is that they didn't have to pay taxes. Harrington's parents probably don't pay their taxes and Billy grits his teeth- they didn't even turn up to their son's fucking *graduation* and the memory makes him angry, even angrier than anything Neil's ever done to him because Harrington deserves better. He deserved more than the dumb fucking

Party turning up to cheer his shitty 2.4 GPA, more than Mrs Byers and Chief Hopper taking pity on him after only realising once Steve walked off the stage that they hadn't come and including him in their family pictures with the Wheeler Bitch as a consolation prize, more than Billy searching the crowd and feeling like he had one over on Harrington because even Neil had turned up with Susan and Max. He's angry and he makes himself leave the room, because otherwise he'll destroy the only thing in the house that matters to him and *he's trying to make things right*, god damn it.

Cleaning out the bucket takes time and he calls Robin as it fills with water in the kitchen sink. "Hello?" speaking to her always reminds him of her red lollipop-mouth.

"Harrington isn't coming in today," he snaps, wanting this over and done with as quickly as possible. It's only going to be downhill for their conversation once she recognises his voice.

"Why not?" there's suspicion and anger and he feels his tentative control snapping.

"Because he's a fucking idiot," and hangs up just as the bucket overflows. On second thought, he unplugs the phone from the wall so she can't call back again. Only as he's going back through to the lounge does it occur to him that she probably sounded like that because she has her own trauma, too.

*Too bad* he thinks as he stands over Steve, who is pale as *Casper the Friendly Ghost* and hair listlessly splayed over the couch cushions. He wants to make some comment about how the damn princess can only sleep with the lights on, but he knows it'll twist bitterly in his mouth to ruminations about how half the people in this room could never before afford to keep the lights on. He bites his tongue with such tremendous effort it exhausts him. Bob Ross is on the TV and he knows Steve's changed it to this channel to make him stay with him, because him and his fucking abandonment issues, right?

Part of him is already burning with the need to defend himself; mouth ready to yell *So I like painting and fucking what?!*, lips skinning back to bare his teeth before a fight. But Billy stops himself saying the words. Steve looks up at him tiredly.

Billy's far from stupid- he moved in to Steve's house because he had nowhere to go and when Harrington offered two weeks after the *thing* left and he caught Billy sleeping in his car, Billy accepted because he was thinking of the coming fall and how the temperature was going to drop and how he didn't want to freeze to death in his car. Suspects Steve was probably thinking less of doing the 'right thing' and more that he was lonely in his big house and couldn't remember the last time he'd seen his parents and that when the kids went back to school he felt abandoned by them and saw Billy more as an unconscious way to tell them 'fuck you'. But why he *stayed*... that's a different story. Probably something to do with how they ended up fucking that night on the backseat of Billy's car, how Steve delighted in fucking in his parents' never-used bedroom, how Steve's house is completely different from the rest of Hawkins Billy knew before the *thing*, the way they both sleep with the lights on and how they both threaten one another to take care of themselves.

It's not quite *I love you*- hell, some days Billy isn't even sure they like each other, but he finds himself clambering over Steve to lie down behind him anyway, ordering him to budge up and complaining that no one costs him as much sleep as Harrington in the harshest voice he can muster as an excuse to fucking cuddle.

"Tell anyone about this and you're dead, princess," Billy warns. There's a quiet sound and a soft breeze that might be a laugh and Steve turns over to burrow into Billy's chest with a contented him. "Why turn the fucking TV on if you're not going to watch it you dumb fuck?" Billy demands without any heat, aware his hand is already carding through the mess of Harrington's curls.

The question doesn't get a reply from Steve; instead he just presses even closer against him, heedless that it's probably less comforting now they're both more bone than muscle. Does he feel safe enough not to puke at all, or sure enough Billy won't give him another concussion if he pukes all over the sofa? Billy can't tell and it's a fucked up way to measure their progress, but at least its progress.